

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 IO-11 /094 W

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R 061108Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7948

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 2650

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TH, EGEN, ECRE

SUBJ: TAMBON DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

REF: 75 BANGKOK TOAID-A-321

SUMMARY. KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT'S 1975 TAHBON DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (TDP) APPEARS TO BE A QUALIFIED SUCCESS. IT HAS ACHIEVED HIGH INITIAL IMPACT. MANY PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT AND INCOMES OF IDLE FARMERS SUPPLEMENTED. AN EXPANDED 1976 PROGRAM IS TO BE IMPLEMENTED SHORTLY. THE TDP WILL PROBABLY HELP KHUKRIT IN THE APRIL 4 ELECTIONS, BUT PROBABLY ONLY marginally. THE RTG MUST INSTITUTIONALIZE REDISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES INVOLVED IN PROGRAM FOR LONGER TERM BENEFITS. END SUMMARY.

1. INTRODUCTION. IN HIS MARCH 19, 1975, POLICY STATEMENT TO THE PARLIAMENT WHEN HE PRESENTED HIS CABINET FOR THE PARLIAMENTS' VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT PROPOSED THE TAMBON DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (TDP) AS  
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PART OF HIS PLEDGE TO ALLOCATE MORE RESOURCES TO THE

COUNTRYSIDE. THE BILL IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM WAS FINALLY PASSED BY THE HOUSE ON APRIL 24, 1975. THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT PROPOSED CONTINUATION OF AN EXPANDED PROGRAM FOR 1976 IN THE BUDGET WHICH PASSED IN OCTOBER, 1975. THIS TELEGRAM BRIEFLY DESCRIBES THE PROGRAM, ITS PURPOSES, THE PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED AND ESTIMATES OF THE SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM. A FULLER ACCOUNT OF THE PROGRAM FOLLOWS BY AIRGRAM.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM. IN THAI FISCAL YEAR 1975, WHICH RAN FROM OCTOBER 1, 1974, TO SEPTEMBER 30, 1975, THE RTG ALLOCATED BAHT2.5 BILLION (\$125 MILLION) FOR THE TDP. THE PROGRAM WAS EXPANDED FOR THAI FY 1976 TO BAHT3.5 BILLION (\$175 MILLION) WITH ONLY MINOR CHANGES IN THE ALLLOCATION OF FUNDS AND PROCEDURE FOR APPROVING PROJECTS. THIS MONEY WAS DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE NINE ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY, WITH EACH TAMBON (SUB-DISTRICT OR GROUP OF VILLAGES) RECEIVING APPROXIMATELY BATH500,000. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT IN THAILAND NO PART OF THE COUNTRY WAS OVERLOOKED.

3. TO CUT THROUGH THE COMPLICATED THAI BUREAUCRATIC SYSTEM, THE COMMITTEE FOR PROVIDING RURAL EMPLOYMENT (CPRE) WAS CREATED TO CHANNEL THE BAHT2.5 BILLION TO THE TAMBONS. THE CPRE, WHICH REPORTED DIRECTLY TO THE PRIME MINISTER, WAS CHAIRED BY THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND HAD AS MEMBERS HEADS OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS IN THE MINISTRY. HE CPRE SUPERVISED DISTRIBUTION OF THE MONEY THROUGH NINE REGIONAL SUB-COMMITTEES, WHICH SERVED AS THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE TAMBON COUNCILS AND THE CPRE.

4. PLANS WERE SUBMITTED THROUGH THE DISTRICT OFFICER AND THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS TO THE REGIONAL SUB-COMMITTEES WHICH EITHER REJECTED, REVISED, OR APPROVED THEM. AFTER APPROVAL WAS GRANTED, THE TAMBON COMMITTEES RECEIVED MONEY FROM THE PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES IN 20PERCENT INCREMENTS WITH EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS NECESSARY BEFORE THE NEXT 20PERCENT WOULD BE PROVIDED. UNDER THE 1976 PROGRAM EACH TAMBON WILL BE ALLOCATED BAHT570,000 AND PROJECTS APPROVED AT PROVINCE, INSTEAD OF REGIONAL, LEVEL.

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5. PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM. THE STATED PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM WERE TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF REAL LOCAL CONTROL OVER GOVERNMENT IN THE RURAL SECTOR AND TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR FARMERS BETWEEN CROP SEASONS TO PROVIDE SUPPLEMENTARY CASH INCOME. HOWEVER, IN ADDITION, THE TDP PROVIDED CONCRETE EVIDENCE THAT THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT WAS DOING SOMETHING ABOUT CORRECTING THE IMBALANCE

BETWEEN RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO BANGKOK AND THE COUNTRYSIDE. FOR THIS REASON THE RTG DECIDED ON A SHORT TERM, HIGH IMPACT PROGRAM SUCH AS THE TDP. THE COTERIE AROUND THE FINANCE MINISTER, BUNCHU ROTCHANASATHIAN, DID NOT OVERLOOK THE POSITIVE POLITICAL FALLOUT SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD HAVE FOR THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY (SAP) IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS, WHICH AT THAT TIME SOME OF THEM EXPECTED TO BE HELD IN OCTOBER, 1976.

6. ACCORDING TO A BUREAU OF THE BUDGET (BOB) STUDY OF THE TDP (BEING TRANSLATED BY USOM), A TOTAL OF 43,600 PROJECTS SO FAR HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN 11 CATEGORIES, INCLUDING IRRIGATION DITCHES AND CANALS, ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR, DIKES AND SMALL IRRIGATION DAMS AND HEALTH CENTERS. NATIONWIDE, OVER 45 MILLION MANHOURS OF LOCAL LABOR WERE EXPENDED WITH FROM 18PERCENT TO 38PERCENT OF THE PROGRAM COSTS SPENT FOR LABOR, DEPENDING ON THE REGION.

7. CONCLUSION. THE TDP WAS A LIMITED SUCCESS. PSYCHOLOGICALLY, IN THE VIEW OF MOST LOCAL OFFICIALS AT LEAST, THE PROGRAM HAD A POSITIVEIMPACT. ACCORDING TO THE AFOREMENTIONED BOB STUDY, 70PERCENT OF THE LOCAL OFFICIALS INTERVIEWED BELIEVED THAT THE PROJECTS HELPED THE POOR; 52PERCENT BELIEVED THE PROJECTS INCREASED THE INCOME OF THE RURAL PEOPLE; 62 PERCENT BELIEVED THAT THE PROJECTS RESULTED IN IMPROVING THE REPUTATION OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT; AND 63PERCENT BELIEVED THAT THE PROJECTS RESULTED IN IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS OF CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION. THE MONIES DESTINED FOR THE TAMBONS GENERALLY REACHED THE DESTINATION AND WERE GENERALLY USED IN PROJECTS DESIGNED TO HELP THE PEOPLE. IT NOTICEABLY INCREASED INCOME OF FARMERS IN CERTAIN AREAS. CORRUPTION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN KEPT AT RELATIVELY LOW  
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LEVELS. WHAT CORRUPTION THAT DID OCCUR WAS BETTER ACCEPTED BECAUSE IT APPARENTLY WAS ONE BY OFFICIALS AT THE DISTRICT OR TAMBON LEVELS, RATHER, THAN AT THE BANGKOK LEVEL.

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

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8. HOWEVER, A PROGRAM OF THIS TYPE CAN ONLY HAVE A FAVORABLE IMPACT FOR THE SHORT TERM AND THUS MUST BE VIEWED AS A STOPGAP MEASURE. IF THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE PROGRAM ARE NOT REMEDIED IN THE 1976 PROGRAM AND THE PROGRAM INSTITUTIONALIZED WITHIN THE REGULAR GOVERNMENT BUDGET, WITH THE NECESSARY REFORMS TO IMPLEMENT IT MORE EFFECTIVELY, THE FAVORABLE EFFECT WILL FADE AWAY QUICKLY. THE VILLAGERS WILL BE LEFT WITH THE FEELING THAT THIS PROGRAM WAS LIKE A SINGLE SHOWER WHICH ONLY TEMPORARILY WATERED THE PARCHED EARTH.

9. THE TDP IS BOUND TO HELP PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT IN THE APRIL 4 ELECTIONS, BUT ONLY marginally. OUR CONSULS REPORT THAT THE VILLAGERS IDENTIFY THE TDP WITH KHUKRIT. HOWEVER, IT IS THE GENERAL RULE IN THAI ELECTIONS THAT THE PEOPLE VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATE, NOT THE PARTY. ALL CONSULS REPORT THAT, UNLESS THE SAP CAN FIELD CANDIDATES WITH PERSONAL APPEAL TO THE ELECTORATE, SOMETHING IT DID NOT DO IN THE LAST ELECTION, SAP WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CAPITALIZE SIGNIFICANTLY ON THIS LIMITED SUCCESS OF THE  
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TDP.

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## Message Attributes

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